



Rowan Alba
More than just a roof

For the Appointment of
Director

 rowanalba.org

accept **support** **include**

Introduction from CEO

When I joined Rowan Alba in January 2023 as the new Chief Executive Officer, I initially worked with the founder and long term CEO Helen Carlin. What I learned was an amazing story of a journey which saw the growth and development of Rowan Alba as an organisation which has transformed to become an exemplar of services to homeless individuals. It is my absolute pleasure to carry on this great work.



Rowan Alba has played a significant role in preventing homeless people from experiencing the worst and most feared outcomes through its unique provision of long term supported accommodation initially at Thorntree Street, Leith, Edinburgh and now at Thorntree Mill, Peffermill, Craigmillar, Edinburgh. We also continue to provide vital on site support service to women in our temporary accommodation unit, Stramullion, West Pilton Park, Edinburgh.

We are extremely excited to have secured accommodation to provide long term supported accommodation for women in Leamington Terrace, Edinburgh. We hope to open this service in Spring 2024.

Having demonstrated the efficacy of our model, in human and financial terms, I don't doubt that the coming years will be a time of further growth for the organisation, helping a great many more people, not for a year or two, but for the rest of their lives, or just as long as they need it.

In addition to our accommodation based service, we have our volunteering service, CARDS (Community Alcohol Related Damage Service). This is a fantastic service with strong links to NHS Lothian and Social Services, linking a volunteer to a client in the community, providing vital support and access to services, giving them a place to breath and be, look after their well-being and prevent large scale damage to their lifestyle by homelessness, hospitalisation and the depths of despair in their addiction.

All our services are designed and delivered in line with our underlying values of Accept, Support and Include.

People are most definitely our biggest asset at Rowan Alba. We are extremely fortunate to have many long-serving committed and skilled people working with us who are dedicated to ensuring that our organisation thrives. Our nurturing, open and inclusive culture has grown with our staff team who deliver our live-saving services every day.

Karen Barr, CEO



Background

Our history

Rowan Alba began to deliver its unique blend of Care at Home and Supported Living with the opening of Thorntree Street in 2004. Originally a part of a UK wide charity, Rowan Alba became independent in 2005.

The aim of Thorntree Street is to provide secure tenancies to older people who had a history of homelessness and a long-term history of problematic alcohol use.

Thorntree Street made Housing First a priority and put the security and dignity of its tenants at the forefront. In the following years our charity has developed more services in Edinburgh which reduce the chances of people becoming homeless or, where this has happened, provide people with the ongoing care and support they need.



How our services have grown

Starting from Thorntree Street in 2004, we have grown a set of strategically-designed services which are effective in coping with the human impact of unsuitable services or policies and addressing the root causes of homelessness in our communities. Our services often exist as a part of pathway from the NHS into the community. What binds these various solutions together is a compassionate approach built around every individual's needs.

2004



Supported accommodation with Scottish Assured Tenancies for up to 12 former street homeless men in a communal setting. Support with physical and emotional health and managing alcohol use.

2007



Transitional housing for up to 10 women. Supports women both emotionally and practically to obtain tenancy's, learn life skills, be independent, gain confidence and meet new people.

2010



Community Alcohol Related Damage Service is a befriending service which provides emotional health and social networks to service users through volunteers.

2022



Supported living for 9 former street homeless men. This has been part-funded through Community Share Investment in partnership with Common Ground Against Homelessness.

2024



Supported living for 9 women who have or are experiencing repeat homeless, violence & aggression and domestic violence.



Our values

Our values are based on the extensive experience we have of supporting people and helping them build a way of life that works for them.

The 3 foundation principles that underpin our values

accept

Accept people as they are. The fundamental principle of the right of the individual to make choices about their lives. Security of tenure, safety, choice, dignity and respect must be at the heart of all that we do.

support

Support those ready to move to a more independent life. We offer a balance between independent, supported and communal living. We are responsive to the changing needs, priorities and aspirations of each individual.

include

We strive to include all people in society. By giving ongoing care for those who are not ready, or whose life experiences have left them unable to live independent of support until now we can create inclusion.

The Thorntree model

Rowan Alba's centre at Thorntree St. in Leith operates a unique model for living that supports former street homeless people in a sustainable way of life.

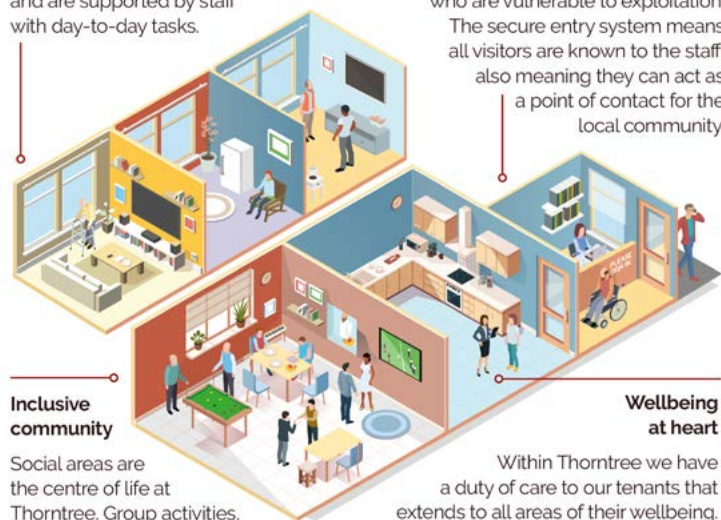
Independent individuals by nature, Thorntree tenants contribute to the management and organisation. The atmosphere is far from the top-down regimes which have characterised 'homeless shelters' in the past.

A supportive real home

Every tenant has a self-contained flat where they meet visitors and are supported by staff with day-to-day tasks.

Safety and security

Our staff are available 24hrs to monitor the safety of the tenants, who are vulnerable to exploitation. The secure entry system means all visitors are known to the staff, also meaning they can act as a point of contact for the local community.



Inclusive community

Social areas are the centre of life at Thorntree. Group activities, games and conversation go alongside social decision-making where tenants can shape and form their way of life.

Wellbeing at heart

Within Thorntree we have a duty of care to our tenants that extends to all areas of their wellbeing. Eating a good diet together is the basis of socialising and group support. Tenants are under no pressure to eat together, but almost all choose to.

Our culture

At Rowan Alba we understand that we all have different journeys.

We believe that people change and no one should be written off without being given another chance. This is why we foster a culture of personal development and peer support. Many of our staff began as volunteers or service users and as their skills grew they took on paid roles. Rowan Alba has a structured framework for career development, which is as supportive of our employees as our tenants. We believe every employee should have opportunities to grow professionally and personally, whilst doing life-changing work.



Declan
Service Leader



Paul
Specialist
Support worker



Emma
Service Leader



“Seeing one of the tenants eating and enjoying healthy food prepared by volunteers felt like a huge achievement.”

Mario Wellbeing volunteer, Thornree St.

Wellbeing at heart

Through our Wellbeing and Activities programme, tenants at our Thorntree, Thorntree Mill and Stramullion centres have the opportunity to join in a variety of activities.

The activities programme is designed to support the different aspects of wellbeing:

- Physical Activities
- Taking Notice
- Connecting
- Giving back
- Learning

Since the start of our wellbeing and activities project at Thornree St. our tenants have shown progress or achieved stability in:

Mental health 89%



Life skills 75%



Physical health 63%



Reducing addictions 78%



Social interactions 100%



Maintaining accomodation 100%



Role of Director



What is a Board Director?

A Charity director has the same powers as a Trustee, but with some additional responsibilities.

Trustees have the overall legal responsibility for a charity. The law describes charity trustees as “the persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity”.

If an organisation is a charity, even though the constitution and names may be different (such as board members or management committee members), under the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 these people are defined as “charity trustees”.

As Rowan Alba Limited is a company limited by guarantee 289744 with Charitable Status (Charity No.SC036775), board members are referred to as directors and acquire additional responsibilities in addition to the above. However, it is the role that matters, not the title.

The directors are the people who take decisions as the governing body of Rowan Alba, but they need to act collectively as a board. Only if they have been given the authority of the board can a director act on his/her own.



Job description/person specification

A Rowan Alba board member is a director of the organisation and has responsibility to ensure the successful delivery of the mission and aims of the organisation. Rowan Alba Ltd is a charity with the governance structure of a Company Limited by Guarantee, in which all the directors of the company are also members.

Commitment

Being a Rowan Alba director requires a commitment to attend as a minimum four full board meetings a year, and to be a member of at least one sub-committee of the Board. You will also agree to be an advocate for Rowan Alba and undertake work in between board meetings to progress the aims of the organisation. You will play your part as a director in fulfilling the items under 'Board Responsibility'.

Key Board roles

Chairperson

The board chairperson heads up the full board meetings of Rowan Alba, supports the CEO of Rowan Alba under the direction of the board, leads on the development of the board and ensures its decisions are implemented and takes urgent action between board meetings when it isn't possible to hold a meeting.

Vice Chairpersons

Vice-Chairpersons act as a chairperson of a designated scrutiny sub-committee and if required deputise for any other board approved chairperson if he/she is absent from a board meeting or unavailable when urgent action is necessary.

Treasurer

Treasurer helps the board to carry out their financial responsibilities through; presenting financial reports to the board so that every director understands Rowan Alba's financial position; advising the board on financial decisions that need to be made; overseeing the preparation and scrutiny of the annual reports. He/she also takes primary responsibility for facilitating regular updating and review of the risk register.

Each of these roles will generally be carried out for a term (9 years), as set out in the constitution of Rowan Alba.



Terms of office

A normal term of office for a director is one year, at the end of which the director must stand down, and if willing/able, can put themselves forward for re-election.

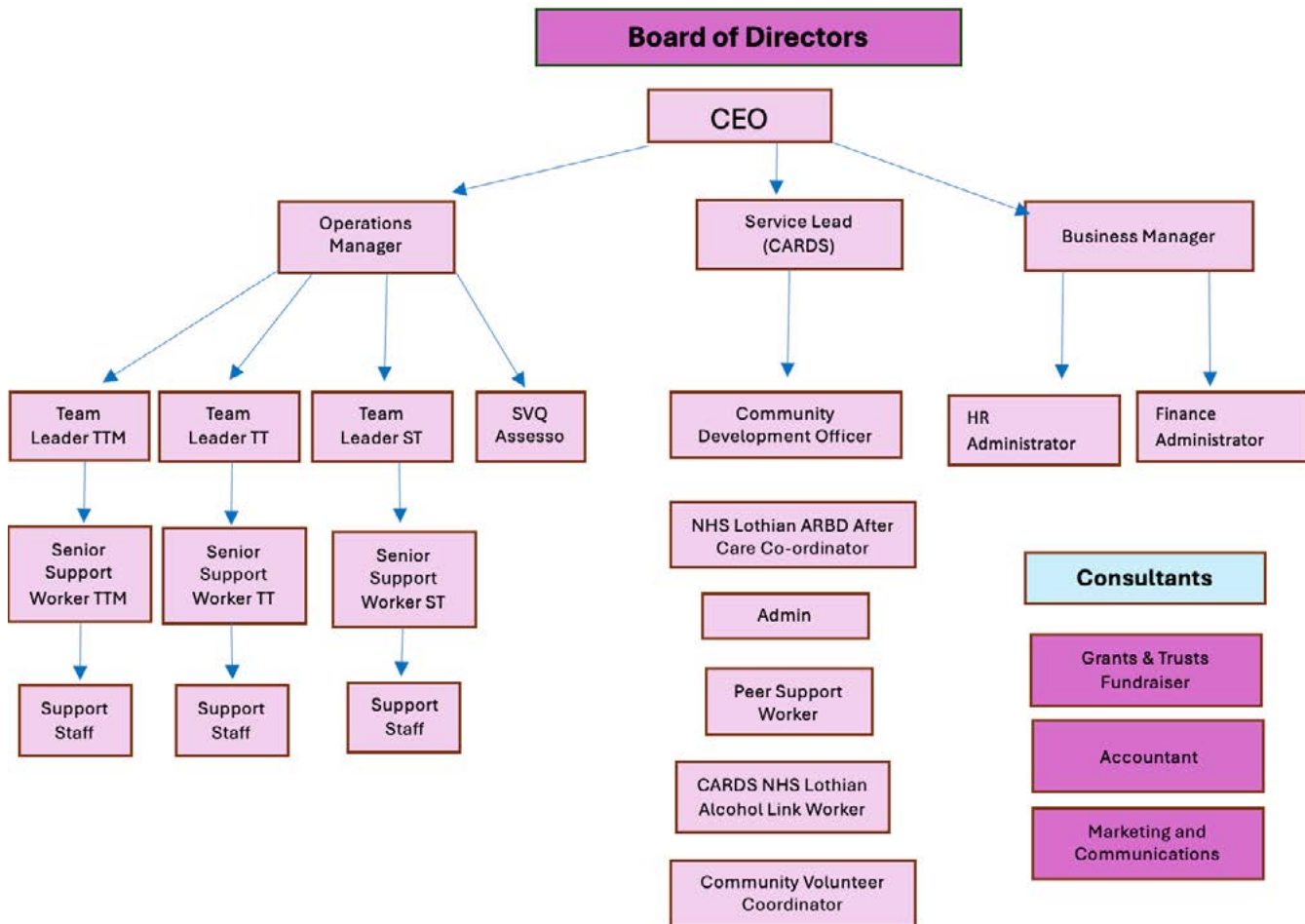
The organisation will offer each director an informal meeting annually where an opportunity will be offered to exchange views on how best the director can contribute to the future priorities and work of the board.

If someone is nominated to be a director and they gain more than 75% approval of a vote taken at a quorate director's meeting they will be confirmed as a director of Rowan Alba.

A director can resign before their term of office has been completed and can be removed from office if 75% of the directors agree to carry out this action. Where possible we would ask directors to offer 6 months' notice of their intention to step down from the board as this allows continuity of recruitment and aids succession planning.



Our structure





Further reading

- » Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050010_en_1
- » Charities Act 2006
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060050_en_1
- » National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
- » Governance Hub
www.governancehub.org.uk
- » Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
www.oscr.org.uk
- » OSCR guide for Notifiable Events
https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2155/2016-03-15_guidance-for-notifiable-events_web-version.pdf
- » Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
www.scvo.org.uk/resouces/governance-resources/
- » SCVO Governance
www.scvo.org.uk/governance
- » Dundee Voluntary Action (DVA)
www.d-v-a.org.uk
- » Companies House
www.companieshouse.gov.uk
- » Directory of Social Change – Useful publications
www.dsc.org.uk/Publications/Managementandgovernance
- » Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Second Iteration
[https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s26277/Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Report.pdf](https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s26277/Rapid%20Rehousing%20Transition%20Plan%20Report.pdf)



How to Apply

For further information or a confidential discussion, please contact our Chief Executive kbarr@rowanalba.org



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Rowan Alba Limited is a Company Limited by Guarantee 289744 with Charitable Status (Charity No.SC036775). Our registered head office is 1 Lochrin Square, 92 - 98 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh, EH3 9QA.